



Office of Management's Monthly Newsletter

The Beacon

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Ronald Hicks, Deputy Administrator

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bea-con (bê ' ken) *noun*

A signaling or guiding device, such as a lighthouse, located on a coast. A source of guidance or

WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

Food Safety Workforce of the Future

by Margaret O'K. Glavin
Associate Administrator

Focus on: Upgrades, Consumer Safety Inspectors, and Consumer Safety Officers

Countdown to 2000. By January 2000, very small meat and poultry plants will be required to meet the requirements in the 1996 final rule on Pathogen Reduction and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (PR/HACCP). In the future, we will determine how best to apply PR/HACCP concepts to the safety of egg products and to other parts of the farm-to-table continuum, such as transportation, after products leave inspected plants for further distribution. Important work on our regulatory reform agenda is ahead. One example is determining how to address such traditional and statutory "other consumer protection" responsibilities as economic adulteration.

Change and continuity. Much of the success of PR/HACCP implementation has been due to the tireless hard work of dedicated FSIS employees -- conducting inspection; in the forefront of training and technical assistance; analyzing laboratory samples; investigating an

enforcement problem; drafting a proposed rule or photocopying it. The fact is, FSIS employees represent the best in professionalism and public service.

That is the primary reason the Agency intends the current workforce to be the nucleus of the workforce of the future. Another reason is it just makes sense to utilize the experience and expertise of employees already on board. However, as the need arises, FSIS will also recruit qualified external candidates for technical, professional, and administrative positions.

Recent personnel actions demonstrate that the transition to the workforce of the future is already positively affecting current FSIS employees.

HACCP Implementation and Upgrades: 458 FSIS Inspectors

Following a review of the impact of HACCP implementation on those positions, the Agency has upgraded of 458 inspection positions.

During 1998, the Agency upgraded 200 Food Inspector positions in large plants (150 from GS-9 to GS-10 and 50 from GS-8 to GS-9). In 1999, the Agency upgraded 73 Food Inspector positions from GS-8 to GS-9. The Agency determined that the upgrades were warranted for in-plant GS-8 processing and combination positions with at least

25% medium complexity and the increased level of responsibility required in dealing with plant personnel in a HACCP environment. At the same time, the Agency upgraded 185 Food Inspector positions from GS-9 to GS-10. These upgrades were based on the incumbents' responsibility for providing relief inspection in a wide range of slaughter and processing plants involving an extensive variety of operations and all nine HACCP processing categories.

In FY 2000, the Agency will also review the impact of HACCP implementation on VMO and non-line inspection positions in very small plants.

Introduction of the GS-1862 Consumer Safety Inspector Series: 2600 FSIS Employees

The GS-1862, Consumer Safety Inspector, became an FSIS occupation in July 1999, when the Agency reclassified over 2600 GS-1863, Food Inspector positions to

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the GS-1862 series. The change in series for these non-line inspection positions in large and small HACCP plants reflects the shift in emphasis under HACCP from a primary emphasis on *inspecting individual products and plants* against standards to a primary focus on *verification that establishments have and execute process control systems that comply with statute and Agency regulatory requirements*. Of course, inspectors retain the authority, means, and responsibility to react to observed product adulteration.

The Agency will discharge its obligations under the Federal Labor-Management Relations Statute and Departmental requirements related to this process.

Introduction of GS-696 Consumer Safety Series and Upgrade of PIC's

FSIS plans to use the Consumer Safety series as a major occupation in its workforce because this professional series applies scientific knowledge and principles to regulatory enforcement.

In May 1999, FSIS reclassified the professional Processing Inspection Coordinator (PIC) positions in our 17 District Offices from the GS-1382 series into the new GS-696 Consumer Safety Officer series. The Agency determined that reclassification was warranted because of changes in the program and the regulatory environment since the PIC position was established, including the necessity of adopting a more scientific approach to assessing the implementation of plant HACCP plans to ensure that food manufacturing establishments are supplying safe food for consumers. We also determined that the Consumer Safety Officer GS-696 series better captured the HACCP work and the knowledge required to perform the job than did the Food

Technologist series, also a professional series. As a result of the 1997 field reorganization and HACCP implementation, the responsibilities of the PIC position had expanded significantly and an upgrade to GS-12 was warranted.

Duties: Consumer Safety Officers (CSO) will initiate and carry through to completion an in-depth, comprehensive, and integrated inspection of all food safety and other control systems, which involves performing a complete inspection of each of these control systems individually, and then making an overall, integrated food safety assessment of the establishment and its products. The CSO's most critical role is to make an onsite determination of the adequacy of the plant's use of the underlying sciences to verify production of safe food. The positions may be rotational or patrol assignments. CSO's will also develop their own inspection schedules based on their assessment of the risk involved in each assignment. In addition, CSO's will participate as members of scientific and technical teams on special projects requiring personal application of professional scientific judgment, such as in assessing difficult-to-identify food safety issues in plants other than those in the GS-696's continuing assignment, and in working out successful nationwide implementation of significant new procedures.

Qualifications: All applicants must have a bachelor's degree with 30 semester hours of related science coursework, OR, in the absence of a degree, 30 semester hours of related science coursework PLUS specialized experience. At GS-7 and above, applicants must have one year of specialized experience equivalent to the next lower grade of the position to be filled, or progressively higher-level graduate education. All employees who meet the educational requirements for the

Food Technologist series meet the educational requirements for the Consumer Safety Officer series.

Those classes taken at College Station for which Texas A & M University (TAMU) gives college credit will be counted towards meeting the educational requirements, if they are in one of the fields listed below. Additionally, the Food Safety Education Program offered to Food Inspectors at TAMU will be creditable for 3 semester hours of coursework. However, other continuing education classes, while job-related and reimbursable, will be creditable *only if* they have been evaluated and given college credit by an accredited college or university *and* are in one of the scientific fields that qualify for the GS-696 series. Continuing education units (CEU's) cannot be counted toward meeting the educational requirements for the GS-696 series.

Credit will be given for successful completion of courses listed on transcripts that are in the following majors/departments.

- Animal science (Animal Husbandry)
- Biology/biological science/genetics,
- Chemistry,
- Dairy science,
- related Engineering fields (Agricultural engineering, chemical engineering, food engineering, bioengineering),
- Epidemiology,
- Enology/Viticulture,
- Environmental science (including sanitation),
- Food science/technology (including coursework in the areas of food marketing and food law),
- Food systems,
- Microbiology (virology, bacteriology, parasitology),
- Nutrition,
- Pathology,

- Pharmacology,
- Physiology/Human Anatomy,
- Poultry science/industry,
- Public health science,
- Veterinary medicine, and
- Zoology

(A maximum of 8 semester hours in Statistics may be used in conjunction with coursework in the areas above to meet the 30-semester-hour requirement)

(A maximum of 10 semester hours in Physics may be used in conjunction with coursework in the areas above to meet the 30-semester-hour requirement)

Steering Committee on Workforce of the Future

FSIS has formed a Workforce of the Future Steering Committee (WOFSC) to lead, coordinate, and oversee Agency workforce planning activities and to guide the transition to the workforce of the future.

Over the last year, a number of workgroups have been formed to examine current roles, responsibilities and requisite knowledge and skills of our major occupational groups, food inspectors, veterinary medical officers, and compliance officers in relationship to regulatory and programmatic changes in Agency operations. Administrator Tom Billy and I have appointed the WOFSC after noting that these workgroups, while effective, have been operating relatively independent of one another. He noted, "There is a critical need for coordination of the decisions and recommendations of these workgroups as they directly affect our human and financial resources and, as such, our ability to successfully accomplish current and future regulatory responsibilities." We asked Yvonne Davis, Deputy Director, Human Resources Division to lead the group. Core committee members include Sharin Sachs of the Executive

Management Staff; John Esgar, Joanne Bolton, and Chuck Gensheimer of HRD; and Barbara O'Brien of the Congressional and Public Affairs Staff. All major program areas have appointed at least one representative to the steering committee, as have the National Association of Federal Veterinarians, the Association of Technical and Supervisory Professionals, and the National Joint Council of Food Inspection Locals. The Steering Committee will hold it's first meeting this fall.

For more information on this initiative, contact Yvonne Davis on 202-720-5397 or via e-mail at yvonne.davis@usda.gov.

Editor's Note: Future issues of the Beacon will chart the Agency's progress toward developing the food safety system of the future and the food safety workforce to support that national, farm-to-table food safety system.

RON'S CORNER

Supreme Court Decision

by Ron Hicks
Deputy Administrator
Office of Management
Telephone: 202-720-4425

The U.S. Supreme Court recently ruled that Federal employees have the right to union representation during inspector general investigations, because the IGs are acting as representatives of agency management. In a 5-4 decision, the court held in *NASA vs. Federal Labor Relations Authority* (98-369) that employees must be allowed union counsel when IG investigations could lead to disciplinary action.

"Interviewing an employee who may have information relating to agency maladministration, but who is not himself under suspicion, ordinarily will not trigger the right to union

representation," Justice John Paul Stevens wrote for the court. But not giving employees the right to union help during IG investigations when they face discipline "might erode the right by encouraging the use of investigative conduits outside the employee's bargaining unit and would otherwise frustrate Congress' apparent policy of protecting certain federal employees when they are examined and justifiably fear disciplinary action."

The court's decision centered on the question of whether inspector general offices represent agency management. Under federal labor relations law, employees have the right to request union representation during investigations that may lead to discipline, but only when the investigators represent agency management.

NASA argued that IGs are independent of an agency's management hierarchy, and said the confidentiality of investigations would be compromised by allowing union representatives to participate. The Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) contended that since IGs share their findings with agency management, they in effect represent management. The FLRA also argued that if NASA prevailed, agency managers could circumvent union representation rules by relying on IG investigations for even routine misconduct interviews.

"The investigators employed in NASA's [Office of the Inspector General] are unquestionably 'representatives' of NASA when acting within the scope of their employment," the court ruled. In a dissenting opinion, Justice Clarence Thomas said agency managers cannot control much of IGs' work. Thomas said IG offices perform investigatory roles similar to that of law enforcement agencies. "Surely it would not be reasonable to consider an FBI agent to be a 'representative' of agency

management just because information developed in the course of his investigation of a union employee may be provided to agency management," Thomas said. "Merely providing information does not establish an agency relationship between management and the provider."

FSIS Bargaining Unit employees should consult Article 3, Section N of the Collective Bargaining Agreement as it pertains to this issue.

Voluntary Dispute Intervention Program

by Milo Christianson

Telephone: 612-370-2000

Kathy Welsh

Telephone: 202-720-5657

Labor and Employee Relations Division

This is the first monthly article regarding the Voluntary Dispute Intervention Program (VDIP), which was introduced to FSIS employees in March 1998. The VDIP differs from formal dispute resolution processes (e.g. grievances and discrimination complaints) in several important ways:

- *It is informal.* Formal dispute resolution processes are designed to weigh evidence and render judgements in favor of one party or another, or to reach settlement by a method other than mutual agreement of the disputing parties. The VDIP offers an alternative. It was designed to give disputing parties an opportunity to talk problems out rather than fight them out. Parties are encouraged to look at their conflict as a problem to be solved, and are given an opportunity to find mutually agreeable solutions. A third party, called an intervenor, facilitates the process, but does not advocate for, nor impose a solution upon, either party.

There is no evidence gathering, no investigations, no hearings, no appeals, no presentation of evidence (although the parties may introduce information if they and the intervenor believe that it will help clarify the issues), and minimal paperwork.

- *Resolution is the long-term goal.* The primary goal of formal dispute resolution processes is to resolve the issue(s) that resulted in the grievance or complaint. This is also a goal of the VDIP. The program's primary goal, however, is to help disputing parties build better working relationships by resolving problems in those relationships, problems that may not necessarily be addressed at all through formal processes that are limited to consideration of the issues brought forth by the parties in their grievances and complaints.
- *It builds conflict resolution skills.* By working their way through the issues that led to their conflict with the assistance of a third party intervenor, disputants learn how to listen to each other, how to identify issues that impact negatively on their working relationship, and how to find mutually agreeable solutions. The goal is to teach participants how to resolve their own conflicts, without the intervention of a third party.

For your information and retention, Attachment 1 to this issue of *The Beacon* is a flyer summarizing VDIP.

Workers' Compensation Savings

Three Human Resources Division employees were recently awarded with time off for their efforts that resulted in significant workers' compensation savings to FSIS. Tom Haley, Head, Benefits and Workers' Compensation Section, Minneapolis, MN, together with David Reedstrom, and Kay Caron,

were recognized because of their dedicated efforts in both providing FSIS employees the benefits of workers' compensation at the same time addressing the high cost to FSIS for workers' compensation. They have addressed ways to return employees back to work at various positions. They have worked with United States Investigation Services (USIS) in looking at older cases to identify those that have not been updated in quite a while or investigating suspicion cases. They also provide general overall management of all workers' compensation case files.

Their efforts have netted a savings of over \$18,000,000 to FSIS in lifetime workers' compensation costs.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

When is a Threat not a Threat?

by Mark Leking

Labor and Employee Relations Division

Never! A recent FSIS Notice to all employees states: "*Violence or the threat of violence, by or against an FSIS employee is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violators are subject to serious disciplinary action and possible criminal charges.*"

We have not had any recent cases of an FSIS employee actually killing or seriously injuring co-workers or plant employees. However, there have been several recent instances where employees have been severely disciplined or removed for making threats of violence.

FSIS takes any threat as seriously as we take actual violence. Please be aware of this when speaking with your co-workers and others in the workplace. A few inappropriate words spoken in anger, or even in jest, can have a profound effect on your career.

If you feel that personal or work pressures are building beyond your ability to control them, please contact our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 800-523-5668 and/or your supervisor.

If you feel that threats have been made against you in the workplace, notify your supervisor immediately.

FINANCE

Delayed Reimbursements for FSIS Employees

*by Stephanie Zagrodniczek
Financial Management Division
Telephone: 202-720-9853*

The USDA is in the process of implementing a new Department-wide accounting system at the National Finance Center (NFC). This change is necessary to bring the Department's accounting system into compliance with requirements prescribed in recently passed legislation, regulations, and guidelines regarding financial management. The new system is called The Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS). The FFIS implementation for our Agency is scheduled for October 1, 1999, which is the beginning of Fiscal Year 2000.

The implementation of FFIS at NFC includes a conversion process whereby the information from the existing accounting system is converted to the new accounting system. The conversion is scheduled to begin October 4 and continue throughout the month. The conversion process requires that various payment processes be put on hold while the conversion takes place. This hold will result in some payments being delayed for the following:

- Travel Reimbursements,
- Claims for Reimbursements,
- Vendor payments, and

- Utility payments.

The accounting system conversion process will not result in any delayed salary payments.

The conversion process will not cause any delays in processing of payment documents. Please continue to submit your travel vouchers, claims for reimbursements, and purchase invoices for processing as you do now. The Financial Management Division will process your documents as soon as they are received. The processed documents will be held at NFC until the conversion takes place and they can be released by the new system for payment in mid to late October. Reimbursements and payments will be received shortly after this payment release process is concluded.

The Agency is working diligently with the Department and NFC to keep the conversion time, payment delays, and any resultant inconvenience to our employees to a minimum.

TRAVEL

Rental Cars for Official Travel

*by Barbara McNiff
Budget Division
Telephone: 202-720-3061*

Employees who are authorized to use a rental vehicle while on official travel should obtain their rental vehicle from a rental agency under contract with the Department of Defense Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC). Under this contract, Government employees who rent vehicles to perform official business are provided Collision Damage Waiver free of charge. If the employee is in an accident or for any reason returns the car with damages that were not there when he or she rented the car, the employee will not

be held responsible, as long as the damages did not occur as a result of employee negligence.

Employees who make their rental car reservations through a Travel Management Center (TMC) -- a travel agency under Government contract -- are automatically provided rental cars from rental agencies under contract with the MTMC. Employees who do not use a TMC can obtain a listing of those car rental agencies that have agreements with the MTMC by accessing the MTMC website at <http://144.100.189.37/travel/car/domestic.htm>. A listing of the car companies and the price listings will appear. If you do not have access to the Internet, contact me to obtain this list.

The Mileage Minute

When a government furnished office (GFO) is part of an employee's regular assignment, reimbursement is not allowed for the mileage between the employee's residence and the GFO. If an employee travels to multiple duty points in a single day, the employee must subtract the one way commuting mileage from the residence to the GFO when computing the daily number of miles driven. (An office provided by the plant for FSIS employees is not considered a GFO).

NationsBank and the Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Program

*by Sue Ayers
Budget Division
Telephone: 202-720-5068*

NationsBank has just completed the setup of ATM access into each of the VISA travel accounts designated to participate in the program. The final mailing of those employee's personal identification numbers (PIN's) should be completed before the end of August. Upon receipt of the PIN's, they may begin to obtain cash advances needed for official

travel assignments. Having completed a review of the documents that accompanied their memorandum from the Director of the Budget Division, they will begin using the PIN's with a thorough knowledge of the regulations and policies governing the proper use of the Visa card and the ATM. Personalized PIN's may be obtained, if preferred, by calling 1-800-472-1424.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Merit Promotion Changes

by Marlin Waller

Human Resources Division

Telephone: 202-720-4827

In large part as a response to a number of comments received from FSIS employees, the Human Resources Field Office (HRFO) in Minneapolis (1-800-370-3747) is no longer using Form 4335-4, Merit Promotion Interest Statement cards, to acknowledge receipt and advise employees on the final status of their application. A new automated tracking system for merit promotion now enables the HRFO to quickly issue a letter to employees acknowledging receipt of application materials, and later, to send a follow-up letter outlining the final outcome of the application in the merit promotion process. The Employment Services and Policy Branch in Washington (202-720-6617) plans to implement a new system in the future, but will continue using the Merit Promotion Interest Statement until further notice.

How Can You Learn about Job Vacancies?

FSIS vacancy announcements are distributed to all offices or headquarters plants within the area of consideration listed on the announcement. They are also listed in the HPDesk library and in Outlook public folders. Another option is to

contact the human resources offices by phone. You can obtain information on field vacancies by calling the Human Resource Field Offices' Internal Placement Section in Minneapolis at 612-370-2000 or 1-800-370-3747. For information about headquarters vacancies, call the Employment Services and Policy Branch in Washington at 202-720-6617. In addition, announcements and application forms can now be obtained by fax 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, from our automated Fax Request Service at 1-800-370-3747.

One of the main sources of information about field vacancies is still the Nationwide Biweekly Announcement Listing. If you are not receiving these listings at your work location or headquarters plant, you should discuss this with your supervisor. The Nationwide Biweekly Announcement Listing is mailed to each establishment or office every two weeks and should be posted or circulated at the work site.

There are more ways to find out about vacancy announcements than in the past. All Federal agencies now post vacancy announcements on the internet at the Office of Personnel Management's "USAJOBS" web site, (<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>) where full text announcements can be viewed or printed. For a list of FSIS vacancies, you can access HRD's website (at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/om/hrd/default.htm>), which links to "USAJOBS". (Select "Employment Opportunities", then "FSIS Jobs", and then "Vacancies"). also includes a "fill-in-the-blanks" Application for Promotion (Form 4335-1), which can be completed on-line, printed, and submitted in hard copy.

Because job vacancies change constantly, employees who are seeking promotion or other job

opportunities should frequently check the above sources for available vacancies, even while on extended approved absence or away from the duty station on official business.

Progress Reviews

As a part of the performance appraisal process, ALL supervisors are required to conduct periodic reviews during the appraisal cycle. Reviews for the following groups of employees will need to be performed:

A-L Bargaining Unit Employees:

According to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article XXI, Section B, periodic reviews between a bargaining unit employee and the rating supervisor shall take place every 4 months during the appraisal period. One of these reviews shall also coincide with the discussion of the annual performance rating. Therefore, for A-L employees, grades 1-12, the second progress review (i.e., 8 month review) must be completed by November 1.

In conducting these reviews, refer to the progress review checklist in any User's Guide for specific points to cover in the discussion with the employee. Employee and supervisor should initial and date block 16 of the FSIS 4430-5 form to certify completion of the progress review discussion.

M-Z Non-Bargaining Unit Employees:

For non-bargaining unit employees, supervisors should conduct progress reviews within 5-7 months of the beginning of the appraisal cycle. Therefore, for M-Z employees, progress reviews must be completed 30 days before or after November 1.

Questions from field employees on the performance appraisal process

should be referred to the Classification, Performance and Recognition Section, HRFO on 612-370-2000 or 1-800-370-3747. Headquarters employees should contact the Performance, Evaluation and Recognition Branch on 202-720-7983.

Deaths in Service

Charles Thompson, FI, OFO, Sioux Falls, SD, 4/21/99

Scott B. Strikowsky, FI, OFO, Devault, PA, 5/29/99

James D. Hedge, FI, OFO, Siloam Springs, AR, 06/11/99

James Long, VMO, OFO, Cass City, MN, 06/27/99

James E. Saffel, FI, OFO, Moorefield, WV, 06/22/99

David M. Hinds, FI, OFO, Amarillo, TX, 07/10/99

Alvin M. Moser, FI, OFO, Dobson, NC, 07/20/99

Thomas Sawal, FI, OFO, Compton, CA, 08/6/99

James B. Mitchell, CSI, OFO, Portland, OR, 08/17/99

July/August Retirements

Richard D. Brown, FI, OFO, Round Rock, TX, 07/31/99, 38 Years

William R. Cantrell, FI, OFO, Bloomfield, CT, 07/31/99, 9 Years

Sharon R. Duncan, FI, OFO, Clinton, AR, 07/31/99, 12 Years

Samuel Hairston, FI, OFO, Telford, PA, 07/31/99, 31 Years

Donald B. Hase, FI, OFO, West Jordan, UT, 07/31/99, 37 Years

Arluss Johnson, FI, OFO, Cold Spring, MN, 07/31/99, 12 Years

David D. Johnson, FI, OFO, Rapid City, SD, 07/30/99, 10 Years

Hansel M. Kelly, FI, OFO, Smithfield, VA, 07/31/99, 32 Years

Jack G. Kloster, Sr., FI, OFO, Springdale, AR, 06/19/99, 23 Years

Damacio Perez Medina, FI, OFO, Seguin, TX, 05/03/99, 23 Years

Philip G. Muscarella, Circuit Supervisor, OFO, Indianapolis, IN, 07/31/99, 33 Years

Marvin A. Nash, FI, OFO, Danbury, CT, 07/31/99, 26 Years

Audie D. Prewitt, ADME, OFO, Ridgeland, MS, 07/31/99, 24 Years

Edward W. Shearn, FI, OFO, Smithfield, VA, 08/02/99, 33 Years

Marion G. Storm, FI, OFO, Springdale, AR, 07/31/99, 29 Years

Arnolds Ukstins, FI, OFO, Philadelphia, PA, 07/31/99, 33 Years

Fred Willis, SECY OA, OFO, Boulder, CO, 07/31/99, 14 Years

Viola L. Wilson, FI, OFO, EL Dorado, AR, 07/30/99, 19 Years

Leave Transfer Recipients

1. Martha Stamps, OFO, AR; Serious Illness

2. Jackie Copeland, OFO, DC; Illness

3. Esther Reed, OFO, CA; Illness

4. Annie Stewart, OM, MN; Serious Illness

5. Kasturi Basu, OFO, DC; Surgery

6. John Roderick, OFO, MA; Surgery

7. Linda Cole, OPPDE, DC; Serious Illness

8. Sonya West, OPPDE, DC; Maternity

9. Mary Burdick, OFO, PA; Complications w/pregnancy

10. Joyce Schultz, OM, MN; Serious Illness

11. FO-98-0031*, OFO, AR; Serious Illness

12. Michelle Jacobson, OM, MN; Maternity

13. Stephanie Showell, OFO, DE; Family Illness

14. Jerry Long, OFO, TN; Illness

15. Michael Schwochert, OFO, CO; Surgery

16. Willia Stepney, OM, DC; Maternity

17. Michelle Carpenter, OFO, OH; Complications w/pregnancy

18. Linda Carey, OA, DC; Surgery

19. FO-99-0003*, OFO, AR; Serious Illness

20. Gary Fetters, OFO, IA; Serious Illness

21. Nancy Clyburn, OPHS, DC; Surgery

22. FO-99-0007*, OFO, SC; Serious Illness

23. George Olson, OFO, MN; Family Illness

24. Kellie Upshaw, OA, DC; Maternity

25. Traci Edmond, OA, DC; Maternity

26. Mary Sutton, OPHS, GA; Complications w/pregnancy

27. FO-99-0010*, OFO, NC; Surgery

28. Cheryl Evans, OFO, AR; Surgery

29. Diana Nolan, OFO, NY; Serious Illness

30. Octavia Thomas, OFO, GA; Complications w/pregnancy

31. Mose Tyler, OFO, CA; Surgery

32. Cynthia Dixon, OM, DC; Illness

33. George Touns, OFO, LA; Serious Illness

34. FO-99-0017*, OFO, OH; Surgery

35. Marilyn Weber, OM, IA; Illness

36. Robert Martz, OFO, IA; Serious Illness

37. Alma Lindsey, OFO, IL; Illness

38. Joseph Banales, OFO, CA; Illness

39. Lorraine Kauffman, OM, DC; Maternity

40. Charles Olson, OFO, WI; Serious Illness

41. Betty Morgan, OFO, AR; Family Illness

42. Amilcar Lopez, OFO, AL; Serious Illness

43. Carolyn Woolfolk, OFO, DC; Surgery

44. Donna Ogdahl, OFO, MN; Surgery

45. Dorothy Fanick, OFO, TX; Serious Illness

46. Kimberly Bauman, OFO, IL; Surgery

47. FO-99-0027, OFO, NC; Surgery

48. Carol Leonard, OM, IA; Serious Illness

49. Theresa Spoering, OFO, MN; Surgery

50. FO-99-0033, OFO, TX

51. FO-99-0034, OFO, SD; Family Illness

52. Nicole Wareham, OFO, IN; Maternity

53. Elizabeth Murphy, OFO, OK; Surgery

54. Karen Wratchford, OFO, KY;

Surgery
55. Michael Craig, OFO, NE; Family Illness

*While not consenting to the publication of their names, certain LTP recipients are assigned a number that they may provide to their co-workers if they choose so that donated leave may be transferred to their account. Any questions on the LTP should be referred to the Human Resources Field Office on 1-800-370-3747 for field employees and to the Classification and Compensation Branch for HQ employees on 202-720-6287.

SUPPLIES

Problems with Medium-Size Latex Gloves - FSIS-07MD

by Pete Bridgeman
Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 301-504-4222

We have had a number of complaints regarding the size of the medium sized latex gloves (FSIS-07MD) currently in stock at Landover. The boxes are labeled "Unisize", and are supposed to be the same as "medium" in size, but most of the complaints received are that they fit too loosely. We have placed a large order for a different brand of glove (High Five) for the medium size; these should be available by the end of September. The Item Number will remain FSIS-07MD.

Addendum to Catalog to be Distributed

Since we still are not sure when, or if, the Landover Service Center will be moving, we are going to distribute the Addendum to the Field Supply Catalog (FSIS-CAT-ADD1) to all Landover Field Supply System customers. This addendum should contain all Forms, Specialty Items, and Supply Items that have been

added to the inventory at Landover since the last publication of the Supply Catalog in April 1998. Look for this addendum by late September.

Reminder - Calendars Are In

Just as a reminder, the Year 2000 Calendars are now in stock at Landover. Wall Calendars for 2000 were mailed out to all FSIS locations during the last week of August. See August's *Beacon* for more information.

ISSUANCES

Recent Agency Issuances

by Mary Wissman
Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 301-504-4233

The following notices and directives have been issued since the August 1999 edition of *The Beacon*. Many recent issuances are available in an electronic format from the "PCDIALS" library in Opendsk and from the "Agency Issuances" public folder in the Exchange mail system (Outlook).

Notice 23-99 (8/3/99)
Instructions for Verifying the *Listeria Monocytogenes* Reassessment

Notice 24-99 (8/3/99)
Shuttle Service Schedule Change

Notice 25-99 (8/5/99)
Electronic Distribution of Laboratory Test Results

Notice 26-99 (8/9/99)
Clarification of Cattle Residue Testing Procedures

Notice 27-99 (8/11/99)
Fiscal Year 2000 Pay Periods and Official Payday Dates

Notice 28-99 (8/17/99)
Submitting FSIS Form 5110-1, Services Rendered

Directives and notices are distributed automatically to applicable Agency employees and offices. Additional copies are available from:

USDA FSIS ASD P&DS
MAILDROP 5241
5601 SUNNYSIDE AVENUE
BELTSVILLE MD 20705-5241
Tel: 301-504-4242
Fax: 301-504-4277

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

Safety at a Glance

by Dr. Fazullah Siddiqui
Office of Field Operations
Telephone: 518-452-6870

Dr. Fazullah Siddiqui presented the following information at a work unit meeting in Brooklyn, NY.

It is the policy of the Office of Field Operations to provide a safe work place free from recognized hazards to protect its employees from injuries and illnesses in Federal establishments and import facilities. FSIS inspection personnel are encouraged to participate in safety and health activities. The following are guidelines for supervisors and inspectors-in-charge:

1. Display the USDA Safety and Health Poster (Form AD-1010) in the workplace.
2. Post Form 4791-21, FSIS Occupant Emergency Plan and a schematic of emergency exits and routes.
3. Check emergency lighting and exit signs. Verify if exit doors are unlocked when the building is occupied.
4. Wear appropriate work clothing (shirts, trousers, coveralls, and frocks).
5. Wear skid-resistant footwear.
6. Use a flashlight when entering dark rooms and hallways.
7. Reimbursement procedures for clothing, skid-resistant footwear

and flashlights are found in FSIS Directive 3410.3, Revision 4, Reimbursement Provisions for Inspection Expenditures.

8. Check freezer doors to prevent accidentally being locked in. Use freezer coats.
9. Wear safety helmets in areas where there is a potential for injury to the head from falling objects.
10. Red meat inspectors must use cut-resistant gloves in accordance with FSIS Notice 22-97.
11. Wear safety goggles appropriate for the hazard.
12. Use hearing protection devices when exposed to noise exceeding 85 decibels. Post Form 4791-20, Record of Noise Exposures.
13. Maintain first aid supplies and have employees trained in first aid when a facility to treat injured employees is not in near proximity to the workplace.
14. Implement lockout/tagout procedures including a cooperative agreement in accordance with FSIS Directive 4791.11, Lockout/Tagout Safety Procedures.
15. Freezer coats, aprons, cut-resistant gloves, helmets, safety goggles, lockout/tagout locks, hearing protection devices, first aid kits and personal inspection equipment are available from the Landover Service Center.
16. Comply with hazard communication standard including chemical listing, material safety data sheets, labeling and employee training in accordance with FSIS Directive 4791.5, Hazard Communication Program.
17. Obtain film badges for inspection personnel exposed to radioactive materials or radiation emitting equipment in accordance with FSIS Directive 4791.7, Monitoring Exposure to Occupational Radiation.
18. Contact appropriate Office of Management Services Staff

Field Safety and Occupational Health Specialist when it is suspected that air contaminants are the cause of health complaints such as sore throat, headaches, and eye and nose irritation. Discuss with plant management the effectiveness of ventilation in reducing air contaminants such as ammonia, chlorine, carbon dioxide, and carbon dioxide in the workplace.

19. Post copy of FSIS Directive 4791.3, Use of Formaldehyde in Laboratory Samples if formalin is used to preserve tissue samples for laboratory analysis.
20. Complete Forms 4791-23 (office) and 4791-24 (plant facilities) for establishment safety and health inspections.
21. Issue FSIS Form 4791-22, Notice of Unsafe or Unhealthful Working Conditions.
22. Respond to FSIS Form 4791-27, Report of Alleged Safety or Health Hazard. Employees should not be discouraged from completing and filing the FSIS Form 4791-27, but rather should be encouraged to report all hazards!
23. Complete FSIS Form 4791-26, Log of Reported Unsafe or Unhealthful Working Conditions.
24. Complete and post FSIS Form 4791-17, Log of Occupational injuries and illnesses.
25. In the event of motor vehicle accident, complete or have completed Form SF-91, Motor Vehicle Accident Report and Form SF-94, Statement of Witness.
26. Complete Form AD-112, Report of Unserviceable, Lost, or Damaged Property if there is damage to a Government owned or leased vehicle.
27. Submit copy of police investigation report.

If an employee sustains an on-the-job injury or illness, complete and submit forms in accordance with the FSIS Supervisor's Guide to Injury Compensation.

Skid-Resistant Footwear

by Tom Wright

Administrative Services Division

Telephone: 301-504-4246

Slips, Trips, and Falls are major causes of injuries among FSIS inspection personnel. Walking surfaces in Federal establishments and import facilities may be wet, greasy, or icy. To help reduce injuries caused by slips or falls, inplant inspection personnel, circuit supervisors, and field compliance officers are required to wear skid-resistant footwear at all times while working in a Federal plant or import facility. The Agency will reimburse personnel required to wear skid-resistant footwear not to exceed \$70 each fiscal year. To take advantage of this program, please refer to FSIS Directive 3410.3, Revision 4, 12/11/98, Reimbursement Provisions for Inspection Expenditures for information on footwear requirements and reimbursement procedures.

Look ahead. Be alert. Expect the unexpected. Wear your skid-resistant footwear. They're worthless if you don't use them! It's up to you!

Safety Decals Program

by Betsy Kogan

Administrative Services Division

Telephone: 301-504-4250

In January 1999, the Environmental, Health and Safety Branch distributed the first set of safety decals to all employees who participated in the self-certification program. Decals are awarded for periods of injury-free employment in increments of 5 years up to 30 years. We continue to receive self-certification forms from employees who would like to participate in the program. Send in a form only once; after you are entered into the database, it will track your years of being injury free. As a reminder, you need to make sure you complete the form by supplying your

date of entrance on duty or the date of your last injury.

Annually in December, we plan to distribute new decals through the Circuit Supervisors. As existing participants become eligible, we will automatically send out a new decal.

If you need a form to participate in the program, contact your Circuit Supervisor or the Field Safety and Occupational Health Specialist responsible for your district. 28.

Multi-District Safety Poster Contest

by *Harry E. Springfield, Jr.*
Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 800-637-6681, ext. 126,
or 215-597-4219, ext. 126

Recently, during the Multi-District Safety Committee meeting for the Districts of Albany, Beltsville, and Philadelphia, conducted on August 4-5, 1999 in Portland, Maine, the Multi-District Safety Poster Contest was held. Members of the Multi-District Safety Committee judged the posters submitted, and selected finalists based on the theme of "The Prevention of Workplace Violence." The finalists are as follows:

First Place: Vincent J. Futia, Food Inspector, Albany District, \$250 Spot Award

Second Place: Clement R. Grangier, Supervisory Food Inspector, Beltsville District, \$200 Spot Award

Third Place: Teresa L. Lollier, Food Inspector, Albany District, \$150 Spot Award

Winning posters appear in Attachment 2 to this issue of *The Beacon*.

In addition, Honorable Mention Certificates will be presented to the remaining FSIS employees who submitted posters in this contest.

Safety and Health Video Tape Library

by *Susan Collins*
Office of Field Operations
Telephone: 409-260-9562, x-229

The safety and occupational health video tape lending library is now maintained by the Human Resource Development Staff's:

Continuing Education and Distance Learning Center
Crystal Park Plaza
2700 E. Bypass 6, Suite 1600
College Station, TX 77845-5015
Fax: 409-260-9579
e-mail: Bob.Burke@usda.gov

The following safety and health tapes are available for lending:

VC 1223 AIDS in Rural Communities
VC 1204 Ammonia
VC 1206 Asbestos Management
VC 1207 Breath/Eyes/Sound
VC 1221 Doing It Right
VC 1228 Employee Education-- Safety in the Office
VC 1225 Epidemic of Fear—AIDS
VC 1220 Fire in the Workplace
VC 198 Hazard Communication Today
VC 1208 Heat Stress
VC 1224 HIV/AIDS in the Federal Workplace
VC 1209 I'm Still Standing

VC 029 I Never Had an Accident on the Job in My...

VC 151 The Safe Circuit
VC 1202 Safety in the Office
VC 119 Tornado Survival Guidelines
VC 1222 Who's Responsible
VC 1205 Winning Combination

Laboratory Safety Series:

VC 1227 Lab Safety
VC 1229 Orientation
VC 1230 Showers/Eyewashes
VC 1231 Flammable/Explosives
VC 1232 OSHA Formaldehyde Standard
VC 1233 Electrical Safety in the Laboratory
VC 1234 Laboratory Ergonomics
VC 1235 Material Safety Data Sheets
VC 1236 Laboratory Hoods
VC 1237 Preventing Contamination
VC Safe Handling Laboratory Glassware
VC 1239 Planning for Laboratory Emergencies
VC 1240 Handling Compressed Gas Cylinders

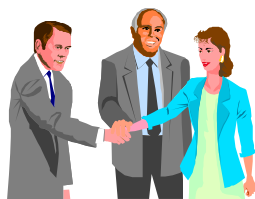
Several videotapes have not been returned -- please return to the above address.

To comment on this newsletter or to submit an article for publication, please contact:

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The current and past editions of *The Beacon* are available electronically on the FSIS OpenDesk and Exchange mail systems as well as on the FSIS Website at: www.fsis.usda.gov/om/adserv.htm

ATTACHMENT 1

**FACT SHEET*****Voluntary Dispute Intervention Program***

FSIS' Voluntary Dispute Intervention Program (VDIP) began in March 1998. Since that time, co-lateral duty intervenors in headquarters' and the field have conducted over 35 interventions. Twenty-eight or 80% of our interventions have resulted in resolutions.

Although we primarily use intervenors from FSIS, we also use those from other USDA agencies, particularly when the intervention involves highly sensitive issues. Other USDA agencies use our intervenors as well to handle similar cases for them.

Employees can access VDIP by calling a toll free number, 1-800-860-VDIP (8347), or by calling one of the local numbers, 612-370-2033 (MN) or 202-205-0066 (DC). For employees covered by the National Basic Agreement, the appropriate Union official and Labor Relations Specialist must also agree to use intervention to resolve a workplace conflict.

The Intervenor

The intervenor is an impartial third party who helps employees involved in a workplace conflict talk openly and frankly to each other in a neutral setting. The intervenor helps the employees identify issues, and hopefully, reach a mutually agreeable resolution. The parties involved in the conflict reach the resolution *not* the intervenor. The intervenor only guides this voluntary process.

The Intervention Process

Intervention is a confidential multi-stage process. It begins with introductions and the intervenor's opening remarks. Then each party is given the opportunity to state the issue(s) in his/her own words. Generally, the party who initiated the intervention will speak first. Next, the parties discuss the issues. At some point the intervenor may meet with each party individually. This is a time for the parties to explain interests, needs and issues confidentially to the intervenor. Then the parties meet jointly again. The parties then begin to develop options or steps that they can take to resolve the conflict. This process may take anywhere from 3 hours to all day. In some cases, a

second or third meeting might be necessary, especially if the dispute has a long history or involves multiple parties and issues.

If a resolution is reached, it is typically put in writing. The intervenor then follows up with the parties at specified intervals, e.g., 30, 60 and 90 days, to ensure that the resolution is working. If the issue is not resolved, the intervenor explains other available forms of redress. By agreeing to intervention, an employee does not give up his/her right to file a formal complaint or grievance if the conflict is not resolved through intervention.

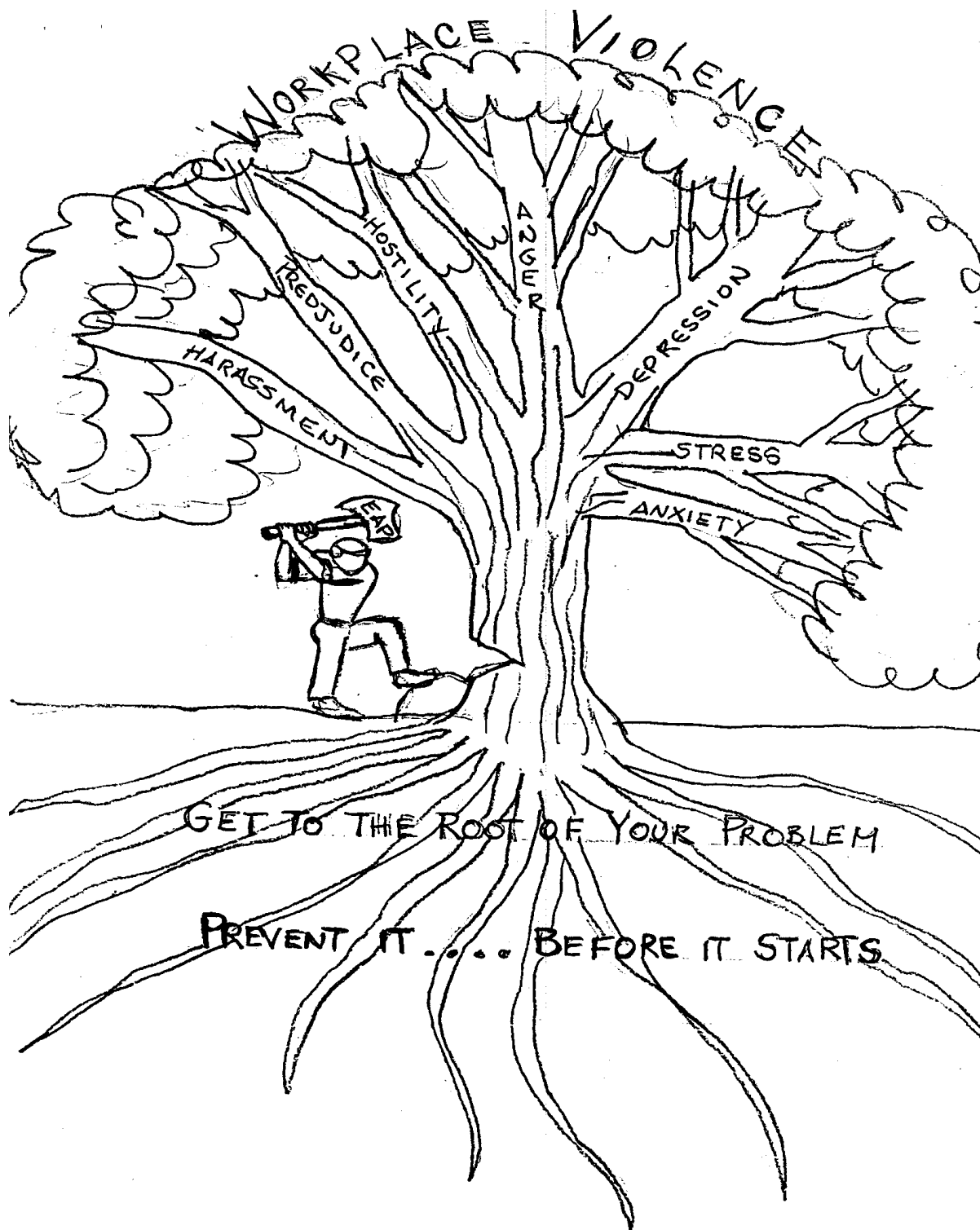
Advantages to Intervention

- It offers parties an opportunity to communicate directly in a neutral setting.
- It can help parties move beyond the barriers created by their emotions. Emotional involvement in a conflict can frequently cloud one's ability to think creatively and objectively.
- It allows parties to face each other and tell each other how the conflict has affected them personally.
- It is timely, cost effective and efficient. Formal processes are often lengthy, expensive and can frequently have an adverse affect on the relationship.

**WORKING TOGETHER
FOR RESOLUTIONS!**



ATTACHMENT 2



First Place: Vincent J. Futia, Food Inspector, Albany

Workplace Violence = DOUBLE TROUBLE



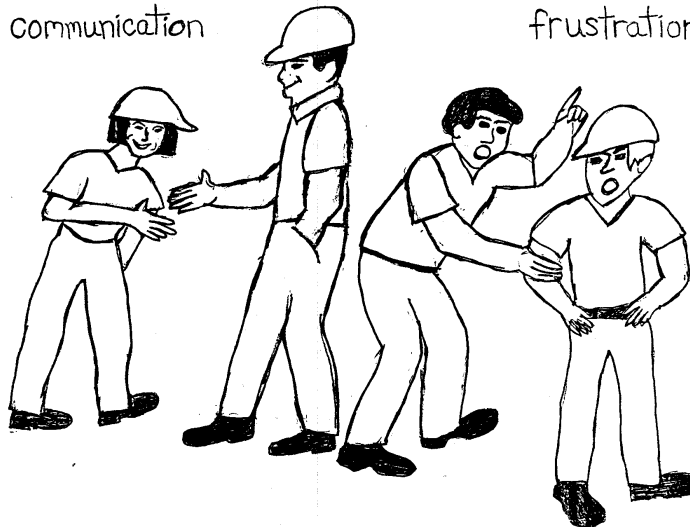
Second Place: Clement R. Grangier, Supervisory Food Inspector, Beltsville District

HELP PREVENT IT BY BEING COURTEOUS & PROFESSIONAL
IN ALL THAT YOU DO!

Prevent Violence

communication

frustration



Third Place: Teresa L. Lollier, Food Inspector, Albany District

Co-Operation ^{not} Confrontation